



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES DIVISION

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MEDIA ADVISORY

Wednesday June 30, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

With the Fourth of July approaching, the Division of Animal Services is calling upon the public to help keep animals safe over the holiday weekend. This summer, that help is especially critical as the San Luis Obispo County shelter has been seeing a significant increase in the number of homeless dogs and cats. That increase, together with a concurrent decrease in the number of animals being adopted, has left the shelter operating at full capacity for several months. With limited space for the continuing daily influx of unwanted animals, the shelter's ability to house those with medical or behavioral problems which may otherwise be treatable is severely challenged. As a result, the Division has also seen a rise in the numbers of animals being euthanized when compared to previous years.

As the shelter traditionally experiences a surge in intakes around Independence Day, Animal Services is reminding pet owners that a few basic precautions will help keep their dog or cat safe at home and minimize the risk that it may wind up being brought into the shelter.

Although fireworks displays are an integral part of the holiday celebration for many people, they can be very distressing for our pets. Loud cracks and booms from fireworks may cause animals to attempt to escape or flee from the noise. Many of these animals wind up lost and disoriented, brought into shelters, or even hit by cars when they run into traffic. A few simple precautions can help protect your pets and minimize the stress or anxiety which is often caused by fireworks:

- Don't take your pets to fireworks displays. Even with their owner nearby, many animals will become agitated and stressed. They may injure themselves or others in attempts to escape.
- Keep your pets in a safe, quiet indoors location. If they will be unattended, remember that they may become destructive when frightened and remove any items which they might damage or which could be dangerous if chewed on. Leave them with some familiar, favorite items such as a chew toy or blanket. Leaving the radio or television on at a normal volume may also be calming and provide them with a sense of companionship.

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- If you know your pet is significantly upset by loud noises, consult with your veterinarian to discuss ways to minimize their fear and anxiety. Some animals may benefit from the short term use of mild sedatives.
- Never leave your pets outside alone. Even in a fenced yard, dogs which wouldn't normally try to escape can panic and flee. Tethered animals can easily become entangled and injure themselves.
- Make sure that your pets are wearing a collar with up-to-date identification tags in case they do get lost. Microchips are helpful for identifying animals brought into a shelter, but won't help neighbors or the general public contact you directly if they find your pet.
- If your pet is lost: Contact Animal Services to file a lost animal report (781-4400); make regular visits to the shelter to look for him; check the Animal Services website daily (www.sloanimalservices.com); call the Division's lost pet hotline for a daily recording of animals brought to the shelter in the last 24 hours (781-4407).

Media Inquiries should be directed to Animal Services Manager Eric Anderson, (805)781-4409.